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Hamas and Islamic Jihad claim responsibility for botched Tel Aviv bombing

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Hamas and Islamic Jihad issued a joint statement on August 19, **claiming** responsibility for an attempted suicide bombing in Tel Aviv the previous night. Both groups warned they would resume suicide bombings as a tactic if Israeli policies in Gaza and against Hamas did not change.

“The al-Qassam Brigades in cooperation with the al-Quds Brigades announce the implementation of the martyrdom operation that took place yesterday evening, Sunday, in the city of Tel Aviv. The Brigades confirm that martyrdom operations inside the occupied territories will return to the forefront as long as the occupation’s massacres, the displacement of civilians, and the continuation of the policy of assassinations continue,” **said** the statement.

The unidentified 50-year-old terrorist from the northern West Bank city of Nablus was carrying an 8-kilogram explosive device, *The Times of Israel* **reported**. The device detonated prematurely, killing the bomber and wounding a passerby. Speaking at the scene of the explosion, Police Commander Peretz Ammar **said** that the man may have activated the device prematurely when he seemingly attempted to target a synagogue. Furthermore, the bomber was not known to Israeli security services, nor did he have a criminal record, noted Ammar.

Adding to the complexity of the attack, the Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security service, is investigating the possibility that Hezbollah or Iran may have played a role in the attack.

An investigation possibly pointing to Iran or Hezbollah is noteworthy. Both actors have openly threatened to respond to Israel’s elimination of prominent figures such as Hezbollah’s **Fuad Shukr** in Beirut and Hamas leader **Ismail Haniyeh** in Tehran. Recent **headlines** have also suggested a looming large-scale drone or missile attack on Israel by Hezbollah and Iran. However, employing a suicide bomber to target Israeli civilians is a tactic that could easily fall within the operational playbook of both Hezbollah and the Iranian regime.

In the aftermath of the botched attack, Palestinian social media became rife with **propaganda** lauding the bomber and encouraging copycat attacks against Israeli civilians. Graphic illustrations depicting bombs and mangled buses, accompanied by menacing messages about impending suicide attacks, circulated widely.

The claim of responsibility issued by Hamas and Islamic Jihad is significant. However, the most striking aspect of their statement was not merely the acknowledgment of the attack but rather an explicit warning these terrorist groups would resume deploying suicide bombers against Israeli cities.

Joe Truzman is an editor and senior research analyst at FDD’s Long War Journal focused primarily on Palestinian armed groups and non-state actors in the Middle East.

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